

Welcome to the neighborhood

For many people, having a piece of property next door to a national forest is the fulfillment of a dream. Living next to a national forest allows a homeowner to enjoy the beauty of the forest, abundant wildlife, spectacular scenery and a sense of solitude.

At the same time, it is important for property owners to understand what it means to live next door to public lands. National forests are “working” forests managed for multiple uses, including wildlife, timber, water quality and recreation. Opportunities are offered for you to get involved and participate in project planning and have input in these decisions during a process called “scoping.” Along with the many benefits of being a national forest neighbor, there are also responsibilities.

Selling or donating your land

The Shawnee National Forest was established in 1933. The Forest Service buys land from willing sellers as funding is available. Properties that provide important wildlife habitat, protect endangered species, improve access to public lands, and consolidate Forest ownership are considered for purchase and donations.

Land exchanges

Although there is no authority to sell national forest land, the Forest Service can convey land through land-for-land

exchanges when it is clearly in the public’s interest. An effective land exchange program consolidates forest ownership and improves protection, management and use of the national forest.

Boundary management & land lines

The most valuable advice the Shawnee National Forest can give you is to have your property surveyed by a licensed land surveyor. The fence you think is on the property line may not be. The site where you’d like to build your dream home may be partially on the Shawnee. If you construct a building on the Forest, it will have to be removed. Avoid costly mistakes by knowing where your property lines are. If you decide to harvest your timber, check your boundaries well in advance of the harvest. Cutting across property lines can be a costly mistake.



Neighbors of a NF are also encouraged to keep structures and improvements a reasonable distance away from property lines. This reduces the likelihood of an encroachment.

What about fences?

Fences are the responsibility of the landowner. It is your responsibility to keep livestock off national forest land. It is imperative that you ensure that the property lines are accurate before constructing your fence.



Shawnee National Forest

Office hours: 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Headquarters
50 Highway 145 South
Harrisburg, IL 62946
1-800-MY-WOODS
618-253-7114

Hidden Springs Ranger District
602 North First Street
Vienna, IL 62995
618-658-2111

Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District
521 N. Main Street
Jonesboro, IL 62952
618-833-8576

www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee

Follow the Forest on Twitter:
<https://twitter.com/shawneenf>

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Living Next Door to the Shawnee National Forest

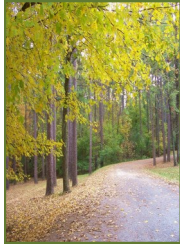


Landowners Guide



Forest Service

Who manages the roads?



Road systems within the Shawnee National Forest include state and federal highways, as well as county and township roads. The Shawnee also main-

tains some roads. These roads may serve as access for recreation use, hunting, fishing, fire control and other activities.

Some roads that access the national forest cross private land on easements acquired from private landowners. When the Forest Service acquires an easement across private property, the Forest Service regulates the use of the road. The public has the right to use the road unless the Forest Service has closed the road to public use.

Access by permit across the national forest to private lands may be granted under some circumstances, if other access is not available. Contact the Shawnee National Forest for more information.

Permits for utilities & events

Private uses of the national forest, such as private road rights-of-way and construction of public utilities, require a special use permit. These permits are issued if the use is compatible with national forest purposes, and if it is in the public interest. Payment of an annual special use permit fee is required.

Uses of the national forest, such as recreation events and commercial services, also require a special use permit, as do gatherings of over 75 people. Not all permit requests are approved, such as when an activity can be reasonably accommodated on private land. Processing an application for a special use permit takes time, and some fees may be billed to the applicant. Please contact your local Forest Service office for questions.

What about fire?

The USDA Forest Service is responsible for protecting the national forest from wildfire.



Local fire departments are responsible for fire suppression on private lands. The Forest Service suppresses fire on private land if it poses a threat to national forest land or when assistance is requested by other agencies. For fires on or near national forest land, call 911.

If a property owner allows a fire to escape onto Shawnee National Forest land, the landowner may be billed for suppression and restoration costs and damages.

The Forest Service sometimes uses prescribed fire to improve wildlife habitat or stimulate ecosystems. Prescribed fire can reduce the occurrence and severity of wild fire by clearing the buildup of flammable material that has accumulated in the forest. For more information regarding prescribed fire, call 618-253-7114.

Who provides law enforcement?

The county sheriff is the primary law enforcement authority and is responsible for the protection of residents and personal property. Report illegal activity to the local sheriff's office. **In the event of an emergency, dial 911.**



The Illinois Department of Natural Resource is the primary authority in dealing with matters related to state fish & wildlife regulations and/or violations. To report violations, please call **1-877-2DNR- LAW**.

The Forest Service has its own law enforcement officers. They are responsible for the protection of forest resources and visitors and enforce all federal regulations related to national forest service lands. These officers work with the county deputies and state conservation officers. They can be reached by calling your local Forest Service office.

Recreation

National forest recreation activities include camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, horseback riding and much more. The public must get landowners' permission to cross private land to access national forest land. The public has the right to recreate on national forest lands adjacent to private property but not on private land.

Collecting firewood

The Forest Service issues permits for cutting firewood for a fee. For more information, contact the Hidden Springs Ranger District or the Mississippi Bluffs office.



Additionally, if you are visiting the Shawnee National Forest, leave your firewood at home, and please do not transport it to campgrounds. Use firewood from local sources. This will help to reduce the spread of non-native insects, which can kill large numbers of trees.

Treating invasive weeds

The Forest Service is actively treating invasive plants on national forest land. If a population of invasive plants straddles both your property and national forest property, please contact your nearest Forest Service office to discuss how to work together to control the plants.

Managing forested land

Professional assistance in managing your private forest land is available from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) www.dnr.illinois.gov, 618-435-8138.